

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W  
----- 057625

R 150206 Z MAR 73  
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6289  
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 2532

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PINS CH US  
SUBJECT: PRC CONCERNS AND OBJECTIVES IN CAMBODIA

REFS: A) PHNOM PENH 2027; B) 1972 HONG KONG 8416

SUMMARY: THE MAIN FACTORS IN PEKING'S VIEW OF CAMBODIA ARE ITS RIVALRY WITH MOSCOW, ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH SIHANOUK, AND ITS DESIRE FOR DETENTE IN ASIA. PRC DOES NOT NEED ANY PRESSURE OF INDUCEMENT FROM THE U. S. TO MAKE IT FAVOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN CAMBODIA ( SO FAR AS PRC IS CONCERNED, U. S. BOMBING IS OF COURSE UNNECESSARY AND MIGHT EVEN HURT). PEKING WOULD PREFER A STABLE AND NEUTRAL CAMBODIA WITH AT LEAST A NOMINAL ROLE FOR SIHANOUK, BECAUSE TO DROP SIHANOUK WOULD BE EMBARRASSING, PARTICULARLY FOR CHOU EN- LAI, AND IT MIGHT ADVANTAGE THE USSR. BUT THE MAIN POINT ABOUT PRC POSITION AND ROLE IS THAT ITS INFLUENCE AND HENCE ITS OPTIONS ARE LIMITED. WHILE PRC HAS SOME ABILITY TO INFLUENCE SIHANOUK, IT CANNOT OVERRIDE HANOI OR COMPEL THE GRUNK- FUNK TO MODERATE THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A TOTAL MILITARY VICTORY-- IF THAT IS THEIR CURRENT INCLINATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, SINCE THE PRC CURRENTLY HAS GREAT AND GROWING DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE, WE WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT PEKING NOT BE LEFT OUT OF ANY DIPLOMATIC SOUNDING PROCESS ( REFTEL A PARA 16). FINALLY, REFTEL A SEEMS TO ASSUME THE DESIRABILITY OF A PERHAPS COSTLY EFFORT ( INCLUDING THE USE OF AIR POWER) TO KEEP THE GKR- FANK GOING; BUT IT DOES NOT REFLECT MUCH CONFIDENCE THAT GKR- FANK WILL IN FACT KEEP GOING, EVEN WITH OUR SUPPORT, OR, IF THEY DO SURVIVE, THAT

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THEY WILL BE ABLE TO FRUSTRATE ANY OF HANOI'S MAJOR DESIGNS. WHAT PAYOFF DO WE HAVE IN MIND? I WOULD SINCERELY WELCOME EDUCATION ON THIS POINT. END SUMMARY.

1. IN LINE WITH ITS DESIRE FOR A GENERAL PEACE IN INDOCHINA AND DETENTE THROUGHOUT ASIA, THE PRC WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO SEE THE CAMBODIAN CONFLICT RESOLVED ( REF B). ALTHOUGH THE STRIFE MAY SEEM TO PEKING LESS URGENT BECAUSE IT DOES NOT INVOLVE, AS DID VIETNAM AND LAOS, A COUNTRY BORDERING CHINA, IT PUTS CAMBODIA OUT OF PHASE WITH THE GENERAL EASING OF SEA TENSIONS. HOWEVER, THE PROSPECTS OF A SETTLEMENT ARE CLOUDED BY THE SINO- SOVIET RIVALRY AND BY THE TWO SIDES' SHARPLY CONFLICTING ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRINCE SIHANOUK AND HIS GOVERNMENT- IN- EXILE.

2. THE PRC PROBABLY CONTINUES TO VIEW SIHANOUK AS ITS BEST HOPE OF ACHIEVING STRONG INFLUENCE IN POST- WAR CAMBODIA AND OF PREVENTING ITS DOMINATION BY MOSCOW AND HANOI ( HONG KONG 2119). IF THEY COULD CHOOSE A SOLUTION, THE CHINESE WOULD NO DOUBT PREFER THAT SIHANOUK RETURN TO PHNOM PENH WITH SUBSTANTIAL POWERS AND RESTORE THE COUNTRY TO NOMINAL NEUTRALITY WITH A STRONG CHINESE PRESENCE-- A SITUATION LIKE THE EARLY 1960'S. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEY WOULD PROBABLY FAVOR A SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD PERMIT SIHANOUK TO RETURN AS A FIGUREHEAD IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT OR AS NOMINAL HEAD OF A SUCCESSFUL INSURGENCY. A FURTHER FALLBACK WOULD BE A SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT WHICH INCLUDED SOME PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE PEKING- EXILE REGIME, NOTABLY PENN NOUTH. THIS WOULD PROBABLY BE AN ACCEPTABLE VARIATION OF THE SO- CALLED " FRENCH FORMULA" ( REF A, PARA 12). AT THE OPPOSITE EXTREME, PEKING WOULD CLEARLY OPPOSE ANY SOLUTION WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE SOVIETS A DOMINANT ROLE, SUCH AS A COALITION OF THE PRESENT GKR AND THE INSURGENTS WITH NO PARTICIPATION BY SIHANOUK OR HIS LOYALISTS. THE PRC ATTITUDE TOWARD RECONVENING THE PARIS CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS CAMBODIA ( REF A, PARA 15) WOULD LIKEWISE DEPEND ON ITS ESTIMATE OF WHETHER THIS WOULD LEAD TO THE OUSTER OF SIHANOUK OR PROVIDE OPENINGS FOR THE SOVIETS. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, THE CHINESE WILL HAVE FAR LESS TO SAY ABOUT A SETTLEMENT THAN HANOI AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE CONTENT WITH A NEUTRAL CAMBODIA WHERE PEKING'S INFLUENCE WAS SIMPLY ON PAR WITH OTHERS.

3. IN ANY CASE, PROLONGED FIGHTING IN CAMBODIA DOES NOT SERVE CHINA'S INTERESTS. NOT ONLY DOES IT RUN COUNTER TO THE PRESENT SECRET

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TREND, BUT IT PROVIDES THE RATIONALE FOR CONTINUED U. S.

MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN CAMBODIA. PEKING HAS ALSO BEEN UNCOMFORTABLY AWARE OF THE REAL CLEAVAGES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SIHANOUK AND FUNK LEADERS AND THE LATTER'S STEADILY IMPROVING POSITION. BEGINNING IN LATE 1972, THE CHINESE PROBABLY ENCOURAGED SIHANOUK TO START ON THE NEGOTIATING TRACK IN ORDER TO BENEFIT FROM THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS SETTLEMENT IN THE VARIOUS INDOCHINA CONFLICTS AND TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS REMAINING POLITICAL CAPITAL IN CAMBODIA ( REF B). ONE DAY AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIETNAM, SIHANOUK MET WITH PREMIER CHOU AND IN TWO LATER INTERVIEWS REVEALED THAT HIS " FRIENDS" HAD URGED HIM TO CONCILIATE ( HONG KONG 0964). HOWEVER, THE PRINCE REVERSED HIS TONE FOLLOWING HIS FEBRUARY VISIT TO HANOI AND HIS MEETINGS WITH HIS IN- COUNTRY " MINISTERS."

4. EVIDENCE IS SCANTY, BUT IT SEEMS QUITE CONCEIVABLE THAT SIHANOUK AND THE FUNK HAVE HAD A SHARP FALLING OUT OVER THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO COMPROMISE AT ALL. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER KHIEU SAMPHAN AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE RELEASED SEVERAL ADAMANT STATEMENTS SINCE THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED STRONGLY SUGGESTING THAT THEY EXPECT TO WIN THE WHOLE PIE AND ARE UNWILLING TO SETTLE FOR LESS. SINCE THEY NOW CLAIM CONTROL OVER NINETY PERCENT OF CAMBODIA'S TERRITORY AND 5.5 MILLION PEOPLE, NEGOTIATIONS BASED ON " EQUALITY" WITH THE GKR MAY HOLD LITTLE ATTRACTION FOR THEM. LIKEWISE, AS THE FUNK'S MILITARY PROWESS HAS GROWN, ITS NEED FOR SIHANOUK HAS DIMINISHED AND IT PROBABLY COULD, IF IT CHOSE, AFFORD TO DO WITHOUT HIM. THE FUNK LEADERS MAY ALSO DISAPPROVE OF SIHANOUK'S CLOSE TIES WITH PEKING AND MAY RESENT CHINA'S ADVICE TO COMPROMISE WHEN THEY SEE VICTORY WITHIN THEIR GRASP.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W  
----- 057794  
R 150206 Z MAR 73  
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6290  
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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EXDIS

5. THEREFORE, THE LONGER HOSTILITIES CONTINUE, THE LESS

SIHANOUK-- AND BY EXTENSION PEKING-- WILL HAVE TO SAY ABOUT A SOLUTION. PEKING' S ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE IS ALSO LIMITED BY ITS MARGINAL INFLUENCE OVER FUNK AND BY ITS SENSITIVITY TO ACCUSATIONS OF SELLING OUT THE INSURGENTS. THE CHINESE MAY HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT SIHANOUK AND THE FUNK CAN RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES, AT LEAST ON THE SURFACE.

6. MEANWHILE, PEKING HAS TREATED SIHANOUK WITH UNACCUSTOMED RESERVE SINCE HIS TRIP TO HANOI. HIS LAST REPORTED PUBLIC APPEARANCE WAS ON FEBRUARY 16 WHEN HE LEFT HAINAN ISLAND FOR SHANGHAI. HE WAS NOT ACCORDED THE NORMAL RED CARPET CEREMONY FOR HIS SHANGHAI ARRIVAL-- INDEED, THE EVENT WAS NOT REPORTED AT ALL. SINCE THEN NCNA HAS NOT REPORTED ANY OF HIS ACTIVITIES ( HONG KONG 2528).

7. THIS ATYPICAL LOW- KEY TREATMENT MAY ON THE ONE HAND REFLECT PEKING' S IRRITATION AT SIHANOUK' S VACILLATION IN REVERTING TO A HARDER LINE DURING HIS HANOI TRIP. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT MAY BE PART OF CHINESE EFFORT TO REDUCE ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH SIHANOUK, BOTH FOR HIS BENEFIT AND THEIRS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, BUT IN OUR OPINION UNLIKELY, THAT THE CHINESE ARE CONSIDERING OTHER OPTIONS INCLUDING THAT OF DROPPING SIHANOUK AND SEEKING GREATER INFLUENCE DIRECTLY WITH THE INSURGENTS. THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY BECAUSE THE CHINESE LEADERS, PARTICULARLY PREMIER CHOU EN- LAI, HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH MONEY AND PRESTIGE IN SUPPORTING THE PRINCE AND HIS ENTOURAGE THAT THEY WOULD BE GREATLY EMBARRASSED BY HIS FAILURE TO GAIN A ROLE IN POST- WAR CAMBODIA. CHOU' S OWN PRESTIGE COULD SUFFER BECAUSE OF HIS LAVISH HOSPITALITY. ( THE INDEPENDENT HONG KONG MING PAO OF  
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FEBRUARY 16 REPORTED THAT PEOPLE IN CANTON WERE GRUMBLING THERE DURING A RECENT VISIT BY THE " BEGGAR KING".)

8. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHINESE WILL CONTINUE TO FAVOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AND WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE SIHANOUK TO SEEK ONE. THEY WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PRINCE IN ANY SETTLEMENT. BUT THEY MUST DO THESE THINGS WITHOUT ANTAGONIZING THE FUNK LEADERS AND HANOI. THUS, CHINESE OPTIONS ARE LIMITED AND THEY HAVE CONSTRAINTS IN TRYING TO INTERVENE TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS ( REF A, PARA 8).

8. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, AND OF REFTEL A' S RECOMMENDATION ( PARA 16) FOR U. S. SOUNDINGS OF FRANCE AND THE USSR, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL FOR THE U. S. TO ASCERTAIN PRC VIEWS ON CAMBODIA' S FUTURE AND ON PROCEDURES TO EFFECT A CEASEFIRE.

9. COMMENT: WE HAVE OF COURSE NOT BEEN IN ON THE FORMULATION OF POLICY IN THIS AREA, BUT I AM SOMEWHAT PUZZLED TO NOTE FROM

REF A THAT ( A) WE SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY  
OF THE GKR AND FANK-- EVEN IF THEY CONTINUE TO FUNCTION -- TO  
FRUSTRATE ANY OF HANOI' S MAJOR DESIGNS; ( B) WE ARE APPARENTLY  
NOT SURE THE GKR AND FANK WILL LAST, EVEN WITH OUR SUPPORT;  
YET, ( C) WE SEEM TO BE WILLING TO ASSUME VARIOUS COSTS AND  
RISKS IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP THE GKR AND FANK GOING.

10. DEPT MAY WISH PASS INFO TO BANGKOK, MOSCOW, PARIS,  
SAIGON, VIENTIANE, CINCPAC.  
OSBORN

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* EXDIS  
\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

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